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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US, PRC on Six Party Talks

Kyodo News ("U.S., CHINA APPROVE ATTEMPTS TO RESUME 6-PARTY TALKS SOON ", 2010/03/04) reported that the United States and the PRC agreed Wednesday to boost diplomatic drives to resume the stalled six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear program "as soon as we can," U.S. President Barack Obama's special envoy on the DPRK said. "I think everybody shares the view that it is important to get back to the negotiating table as soon as we can," Stephen Bosworth told reporters after meeting Wu Dawei, the PRC's special representative for Korean Peninsula affairs, in Beijing. When asked whether the United States will hold bilateral talks with North Korea to help resume the denuclearization process, which Pyongyang quit in April last year, Bosworth said, "I think it would be premature to discuss specific options."

Associated Press ("CHINA WANTS TO RESTART NKOREA NUCLEAR TALKS SOON", Beijing, 2010/03/05) reported that the PRC hopes to revive the six-party talks within the next few months, China Daily reported Friday. "China's goal is to restart the six-party talks in the first half of this year. That's our expectation, but it is difficult to say if this will be realized," envoy Wu Dawei was quoted as saying.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News ("TOP U.S. ENVOY SAYS EVERYTHING POSSIBLE IF N. KOREA DENUCLEARIZES ", 2010/03/04) reported that the U.S. ambassador to the ROK urged the DPRK on Thursday to

immediately return to six-nation nuclear negotiations without any conditions, saying its demands for a peace treaty and the removal of U.N. sanctions can only be available after its return to the talks. Ambassador Kathleen Stephens also said that everything will be possible for the communist nation, including its long-held goal of establishing diplomatic relations with Washington, if Pyongyang returns to the negotiating table and gives up its nuclear programs. "North Korea needs to return to the denuclearization talks and fulfill its commitments," she said at a Seoul forum.

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3. Sino-DPRK Defense Relations

Donga Ilbo ("NK SEEKS REVISION OF 1961 DEFENSE TREATY WITH CHINA", 2010/03/04) reported that the DPRK is known to have proposed to the PRC the revision of a bilateral cooperation treaty in talks on a breakthrough in international sanctions following Pyongyang's nuclear test in May last year. When PRC Premier Wen Jiabao held talks with DPRK leader Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in October last year, the PRC's official Xinhua News Agency did not say whether they discussed the revision of a clause in the treaty guaranteeing the PRC's automatic intervention in the event of a security threat in the DPRK. An informed source on the DPRK based in Beijing said yesterday, however, that the proposed revision was on the agenda at the Wen-Kim meeting, adding the matter will likely be discussed when Kim visits Beijing.

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4. Japan-DPRK Abduction Issue

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, N. KOREA CLASH OVER ABDUCTION AT U.N. RIGHTS COUNCIL MEETING", 2010/03/04) reported that Japan and the DPRK traded barbs over the DPRK's abductions of Japanese nationals at a session of the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva on Wednesday. "The DPRK has not sincerely addressed the abduction issue," Japanese Parliamentary Vice Foreign Minister Chinami Nishimura told some of the 60 ministers and politicians who have traveled to Geneva for the annual ministerial-level U.N. meeting. "Although the DPRK agreed to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the abduction issue, it has not fulfilled the commitment for more than a year and a half," she said. Choe Myong Nam, counselor at the North Korean mission to Geneva, accused Japan of using the abduction issue "for its political agenda." "We urge Japanese officials to apologize" for doing so, he said, adding Japan is using the abduction issue "with a view to translating into reality its long-cherished ambition of reinvading countries in Asia. "

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5. DPRK Public Health

Reuters ("HEALTH PROJECT HELPS NORTH-SOUTH KOREAN TIES: WHO", 2010/03/04) reported that the DPRK has reduced deaths from surgery and among women in childbirth under a program funded by the ROK that is building trust across the divided peninsula, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Thursday. Rates of deadly diarrheal disease in children have fallen dramatically under the project, which has provided training to 6,000 DPRK doctors, the United

Nations agency said. The program, begun in late 2006, has benefited 7 million people in the destitute DPRK. "I've spent 30 years in the field and you don't always get such a high rate of return on investment," the French aid veteran said after a four-day trip to the reclusive country.

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6. DPRK Human Rights

Associated Press ("REPORT: NORTH KOREAN EXECUTED FOR SNEAKING NEWS OUT ", 2010/03/04) reported that a DPRK firing squad publicly executed a factory worker for sneaking news out of the country via his illicit mobile phone, Seoul-based radio said Thursday. The armaments factory worker was accused of divulging the price of rice and other information on living conditions to a friend who defected to the ROK years ago, Open Radio for North Korea reported on its Web site. The ROK's Unification Ministry and the National Intelligence Service they could not confirm the report.

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7. DPRK Food Security

Institute for Far Eastern Studies ("DPRK HOLDS NATIONAL MEETING OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ", 2010/03/04) reported that DPRK authorities and farmers from around the country met on February 25 for two days of meetings under the theme, "Let's Focus All Efforts on Farming and Resolve the Food Problem!" It has been four years since DPRK authorities called for a nationwide meeting of agricultural workers, with the last meeting in February 2006. According to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), the meetings were attended by "[Cabinet Premier] Kim Young Il, [National Defense Commission Vice-Chairman] Ri Yong Mu, and [Supreme People's Assembly Chairman] Choe Tae Bok, leading officials of ministries and national institutions, party and people's committees and agricultural guidance organs in provinces, cities and counties, officials of farm primary organizations, model farmers, scientists and technicians in the field of agriculture and officials of relevant industrial establishments."

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8. DPRK Internet

International Data Group News Service ("REPORT: NORTH KOREA DEVELOPS OWN LINUX DISTRIBUTION", 2010/03/04) reported that the DPRK has reportedly developed its own version of the Linux operating with a graphical user interface that closely resembles Microsoft Windows . A copy of the DPRK Linux distribution , called Red Star, was purchased in Pyongyang for a student named Mikhail, who then posted a brief review of it using the Russian embassy's Internet connection . The desktop interface shown in the screenshots closely resembles Windows, and appears to be based on a recent version of the K Desktop Environment (KDE). The Red Star browser, called My Country , is based on Mozilla's Firefox browser , and allows users to access the DPRK's closed network , called My Country BBS.

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9. DPRK Climate Change

Chosun Ilbo ("UN SAYS N. KOREA'S EXPOSURE TO TOXIC CHEMICALS IS RESULT OF ISOLATION", 2010/03/04) reported that decades after most countries signed on to global bans of highly toxic chemical agents, the DPRK continues to make widespread use of them. United Nations officials say decades of isolation have left the DPRK ignorant about some of the world's most dangerous chemicals -- and that it is taking a heavy toll. Craig Boljkovac manages the chemical and waste program for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. "The environment-related problems that exist in North Korea, I just have to say right now, I think they're much more serious than in many other countries in the world," Boljkevac said.

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10. DPRK Detention of ROK Citizens

JoongAng Ilbo ("OFFICIAL: 3 OF 4 KOREANS HELD BY THE NORTH ID'D", 2010/03/04) reported that a high-ranking government official in Seoul said yesterday three of the four ROK citizens in DPRK detention have been identified. "The government has confirmed that three South Koreans entered North Korea in January [without authorization] and we have identified them through tips from various channels," the official said. "One of them, a man in his 30s or 40s, entered the North alone across China's Tumen region. We're still trying to find out more about the situation and we can't reveal their identities," the official added.

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11. Inter-Korea Economic Cooperation

Agence France Presse ("N.KOREA THREATENS TO SCRAP TOURISM AGREEMENTS WITH SOUTH", Seoul, 2010/03/04) reported that the DPRK Thursday threatened to tear up all tourism agreements and contracts with the ROK unless the Seoul government lifts its embargo on tours to the DPRK, according to state media. Pyongyang said it would revoke all inter-Korean accords and contracts on tours unless the ROK takes quick action to resume tour programmes suspended two years ago. The DPRK would open the border to receive ROK tourists this month and in April while guaranteeing their safety completely, the DPRK's Asia Pacific Peace Committee, a state agency in charge of cross-border exchanges, said in a statement.

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12. Inter-Korea Relations

ITWeb News ("KOREA EASES BORDER CONTROL", 2010/03/04) reported that ROK and DPRK officials have discussed easing restrictions on border passage and telecommunication in the Gaeseong industrial park, reports The Korea Herald. The ROK has suggested using radio frequency identification (RFID) tags for electronic entry control and expanding the system to the DPRK's side of the border.

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA SPURNS S. KOREAN DEMAND TO RESOLVE NUCLEAR ISSUE TOGETHER ", 2010/03/04) reported that the DPRK on Thursday dismissed intensifying pressure from the ROK to allow the nuclear arms program to become a main topic in discussions between the two sides. The Rodong Sinmun said the ROK stance merely amounts to "a ploy to whip up a wanton campaign against the North." "As we have made clear repeatedly, the nuclear issue has nothing to do with inter-Korean relations," the paper said in an editorial, released through the Korean Central News Agency.

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13. ROK-US Relations

Yonhap News ("U.S. ENJOYS BEST EVER TIES WITH S. KOREA: CAMPBELL ", 2010/03/04) reported that the United States enjoys the best ever relations with the ROK on their DPRK policy and other issues of mutual and global concern, a senior U.S. official said Wednesday. "The only thing I would disagree with, you said our relations with Korea are the best that they've been in 10 years," Kurt Campbell, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, said before a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing while responding to a question from a lawmaker. "I would say, how about ever? This is the best I've ever seen relations between Washington and Seoul."

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14. ROK-Turkey Nuclear Cooperation

Yonhap News ("KEPCO SEEKS TO EXPORT NUCLEAR POWER PLANT TO TURKEY: OFFICIALS ", 2010/03/04) reported that the ROK's state-run electricity supplier is seeking to sign a preliminary deal with the Turkish government to explore the feasibility of exporting its nuclear power plant technology to the country, government and company officials here said Thursday. Korea Electric Power Corp. (KEPCO) is "in discussion" with Turkey's energy ministry on signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to construct nuclear power plants there, a ROK government official close to the matter said.

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15. USFJ Base Relocation

Bloomberg (Takashi Hirokawa and Sachiko Sakamaki, "JAPAN MUST DECIDE OKINAWA BASE STANCE THIS MONTH, HATOYAMA SAYS ", 2010/03/04) reported that Japan's Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said his administration must decide its plan on where to relocate a U.S. Marine base in Okinawa this month ahead of a May deadline to resolve a dispute with the Obama administration. "We may run out of time if we don't reach a decision by the end of March," Hatoyama told reporters today in Tokyo. "The government must make a determination in March." Japan has decided to keep the base on Okinawa and offer compensation to local residents, a Defense Ministry official said. Hatoyama and Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano today denied an Asahi newspaper report that the government proposed to the U.S. relocating some of the facilities to Camp Schwab, a separate Marine base on Okinawa.

New York Times ("JAPAN OFFERS NEW PLAN IN OKINAWA DISPUTE", 2010/03/04) reported that

the Japanese government has approached United States officials with a tentative proposal for resolving a festering dispute over an American air base in Okinawa, the Japanese news media reported on Thursday. The proposal would modify a 2006 deal to relocate the Futenma Marine Corps air station, a busy helicopter base, from a crowded city in southern Okinawa to a less populated area in the island's north. Under the new proposal, the base would be moved to the same location but would be smaller and have a diminished impact on local residents and the environment, according to the reports in major Japanese newspapers. The new air station would be built in Camp Schwab, an existing Marine base near the tiny fishing village of Henoko, the site agreed to in the 2006 plan

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16. US on USFJ Base Relocation

Agence France Presse ("US WON'T BE 'DICTATORIAL' IN JAPAN BASE ROW", 2010/03/04) reported that Kurt Campbell Thursday said that the United States understood the need for new governments to revisit predecessors' policies. "It is incumbent on us as a partner to work with them on that process -- not to be dictatorial, but to act as a partner, to listen and to consult," Campbell testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee .

Kyodo News ("U.S. STILL THINKS CURRENT RELOCATION PLAN 'BEST': CAMPBELL", 2010/03/04) reported speaking at a subcommittee of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell said, "We still believe that the current plan that was negotiated several years ago is the best way forward." Touching on some other options floated by Japan for the transfer of the U.S. Marines' Futenma Air Station, Campbell said, "I must say, many of these we've also looked at as well."

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17. Japan-US Relations

Associated Press ("US OFFICIAL: US-JAPAN TIES ARE NOT IN TROUBLE", 2010/03/04) reported that a senior U.S. official is disputing claims that the U.S.-Japan relationship is in trouble because of differences over a plan to move a U.S. military base in Japan. Kurt Campbell told lawmakers Wednesday that most Japanese support the alliance and that claims that the election of a new, less U.S.-leaning government in Japan will hurt it are false.

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18. Japan-US Trade Relations

Agence France Presse ("CLASHING WITH JAPAN, US SEEKS TO PROTECT TUNA", 2010/03/04) reported that the United States has set the stage for a showdown with Japan by calling for a ban on the international trade in Atlantic bluefin tuna, hoping to save the species prized for sushi. The United States said Wednesday it would ask a March 13-25 meeting in Qatar to declare the commercial trade in Atlantic bluefin tuna a threat to the species' survival. Japan, which consumes three-quarters of the global bluefin tuna catch, says an international trade ban is too drastic and has left open the option of defying the restrictions if they are approved.

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19. Japan Climate Change

Kyodo News ("U.N. BIODIVERSITY CHIEF SEEKS NAGOYA PROTOCOL ON GENETIC RESOURCE USE", 2010/03/04) reported that the head of a U.N. treaty on conserving biological diversity wants to see the adoption of a new protocol on the use of genetic resources in such sectors as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, horticulture, cosmetics and biotechnology at an upcoming meeting in Nagoya slated for October. In a recent interview with Kyodo News in Tokyo, Ahmed Djoghlaf, executive secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, said he is hopeful that more than 190 parties to the treaty will agree in Nagoya on a "framework protocol with a clear road map" on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable benefit sharing arising from their utilization. Djoghlaf said the world has lost biodiversity "on a systematic basis" and now faces a "unique and unprecedented crisis," describing what happens now as a "global mass extinction of species."

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20. PRC Defense

Associated Press ("CHINA ANNOUNCES 7.5% JUMP IN DEFENSE SPENDING ", Beijing, 2010/03/04) reported that the PRC on Thursday announced its smallest increase in defense spending in more than two decades, a likely result of both financial constraints and growing concern over perceptions of Beijing as a regional military threat. The planned 7.5% boost in defense spending in 2010 follows at least 20 years of double-digit increases in the budget for the People's Liberation. "China is committed to peaceful development and a military posture that is defensive in nature," said Li Zhaoxing, spokesman for the National People's Congress. He said this year's defense budget of \$77.9 billion remained relatively low, particularly in relation to the country's vast territory and population.

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21. Sino-US Defense Relations

Reuters ("CHINA PLA PLAYS DOWN U.S. CHALLENGE AHEAD OF DEFENCE BUDGET", Beijing, 2010/03/04) reported that the PRC's growing military has no intention of challenging the United States, a senior People's Liberation Army officer said, before the unveiling of the country's annual defense budget on Thursday. Luo indicated the PRC's military spending was focused on protecting its claims to the island, but not spoiling for a confrontation with the United States, which remains much more powerful economically and militarily.

United Press International ("PENTAGON CHINA PAPER MAY BE DELAYED", Beijing, 2010/03/04) reported that the Pentagon may delay its annual PRC Military report to Congress as Washington seeks to mend strained ties with Beijing, the China Daily reported. The China Daily said the Pentagon report -- an annual submission to Congress since 2001 -- may be put off until May, following the April global nuclear security summit in Washington, which PRC President Hu Jintao is likely to attend. The report said the Pentagon report on the PRC's military "has always angered Beijing."

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22. Sino-US Relations

Agence France Presse ("US PLEDGES TO MEND TIES, CHINA SAYS", 2010/03/04) reported that the PRC said Thursday that the United States has pledged to work to improve relations with Beijing after Washington stirred up tensions by approving an arms package to Taiwan and hosting the Dalai Lama. Visiting US Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg held an "in-depth and candid exchange of views" with Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and other officials during a three-day visit this week, said foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang. "The current priority of the US side is to take China's position seriously, honour China's core interests and major concerns... and take concrete actions to push China-US relations back toward sound and stable development." Qin told reporters.

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II. PRC Report

23. PRC Civil Society

Beijing Daily, (Yang Xun, "BEIJING FIRST CIVIL RESCUE TEAM TO BE FORMALLY REGISTERED", 2010/03/04) reported that the famous outdoor tourism rescue team - Beijing Blue Sky Rescue Team, is expected to become China's first formally registered civil rescue team. Now related sector's verification is entering the last stage and the registration will be completed before the end of April, said the leader of the team.

Jinan News ("4.6 BILLION LOAN HELPS RURAL WOMEN START BUSINESS", 2010/03/04) reported that according to Shandong provincial rural credit union, as of the end of 2009, reported that all rural credit cooperatives in Shandong province have provided 4.6 billion RMB to help rural women start their own businesses, and a total of 560,000 women have been helped by the loan.

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24. PRC Climate Change

163.com ("VANTONE FOUNDATION SUPPORTS BEIJING RECYCLING RENEWABLE RESOURCE", 2010/03/04) reported that Vantone Foundation has invested 1 million RMB for the design, production, pilot promotion of resource recycling bins. Now the first 150 community resource recycling bins have finished production and will be gradually put into 7 communities in Beijing.

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